



U.S. Department of Justice

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jury Convicts VIPD Sergeant Jerome Blyden
and Associate of RICO Charges

St. Thomas, USVI – After a five-day trial, a federal jury on St. Thomas on May 8, 2010, convicted VIPD Sergeant Jerome Blyden and associate Gelean Mark of Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) charges, United States Attorney Ronald W. Sharpe; Federal Bureau of Investigation Special Agent-in-Charge Luis Fraticelli; Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent-in-Charge Javier F. Pena; Acting United States Marshal Reginald Bradshaw; Internal Revenue Service Criminal Investigation Division (IRS CID) Special Agent-in-Charge Daniel W. Auer; U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) Inspector-in-Charge David Collins, and Virgin Islands Police Commissioner Novelle Francis announced today.

Mark was convicted of operating a criminal enterprise, and he and Blyden were convicted of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering in connection with the shooting of Nicholas Friday Jr., in May 2004. Mark faces a maximum sentence of 40 years in prison, 20 years for each count. Blyden faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Sentencing has been set for August 18, 2010 .

Evidence presented at trial established that from November 2004 through October 2005, Mark headed a criminal enterprise that engaged in narcotics distribution, unlawful gambling related to dog fighting, and acts of violence. The evidence also showed that Blyden was closely associated with Mark, and served as his enforcer in relation to Mark's drug trafficking.

Testimony showed that on May 24, 2004, Mark and Blyden assaulted Friday because he posed a threat to the criminal enterprise's control of drug dealings in the Smith Bay area of St. Thomas.

This case was investigated by the federal Public Corruption Task Force, which comprises the FBI, DEA, U.S. Marshals Service, IRS CID, USPIS and Virgin Islands Police Department. It was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Kim R. Lindquist and Nolan D. Paige.